

Review

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have all this, in addition to the sound suggestions for the reduction of experimenter bias, makes a book which indeed deserves to be widely studied and discussed.

FRED L. STRODTBECK

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The Social Nature of Psychological Research: The Psychological Experiment as a Social Interaction. By NEIL FRIEDMAN. New York: Basic Books, 1967. xiv, 204 pp. \$6.95.

Somewhere in this Freud-saturated world there must be a man who has thought all women "bad" ever since discovering that his mother was not a virgin. Neil Friedman, the author of this book, may be such a man. Mr. Friedman has discovered that if you take nineteen graduate students, give them (it seems) little or no training as experimenters, and turn them loose on an experiment which requires their constant physical presence with the subject in order to personally present a large number of stimuli, then you *can* get the experimenters to bias the results. On this basis, along with an interesting review of the literature, Mr. Friedman concludes that experimental psychologists in general have been misunderstanding and misinterpreting their own procedures and results; that all of their "findings" are terribly suspect; and that, as perhaps the ultimate insult since it is the last statement in the book, experimentation is no better than participant observation. After all, experiments, as we have seen, are not completely free from bias.

Such purist excess calls forth a vision. Charles Darwin, probably the most successful of all scientific "participant" observers is shaking his finger angrily in the face of Thomas Hunt Morgan: "How dare you presume to claim that you are giving my theories their definitive test with your fruit-flies in bottles, experimentally controlled climates, and other conditions. Surely my observations are every bit as definitive as your experiments."

And yet this is not to say that the book is without interest. There is a nice article (already published by Friedman, *et al.*) on the experiment itself. The analysis goes beyond simply proving that experimenter effect exists. Careful scoring of experimenter behavior from films, in terms of glances, smiles, etc., allows demonstration of the kinds of subtle interaction which produce marked differences in subject response. The reviews of the literature on "tester" (Rorschach, TAT, etc.) as well as experimenter effect are also welcome. More important, however, is the reminder. That experimenters must be careful and work unceasingly to remove them-

selves and other unwanted variables from their research is a message that should periodically emerge in visible places.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Friedman's reviews and conclusions are colored by an approach that is anything but temperate. Forgetting that there are careful experimenters, that there are experiments with built-in guarantees against experimenter effects, that experimenter effects are probably important in only a minority of studies, Mr. Friedman lets loose a shotgun polemic with what seems to be only scarcely hidden glee. One gets the feeling that the author is more of a scientific nihilist and agitator than a warning protector of the community's virtue.

Finally, I cannot resist noting the parallel between this book and the ancient paradox: "Everything I say is a lie." How do we know that Mr. Friedman's "experimenter effects" (student experimenters) were not caused by the experimenter who instructed the experimenters?

GERALD MARWELL

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Hustlers, Beats, and Others. By NED POLSKY. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967. 218 pp. \$5.95.

This is a package of five essays, gathered together because they all deal in one way or another with deviant forms of behavior and because they all represent fairly sharp quarrels with the way in which this subject matter is ordinarily discussed in sociology. The book should be read, then, not only as a series of research reports by a sensitive and intelligent investigator but as a running commentary on the state of the discipline. On both counts, it is a rewarding piece of work.

In one respect, *Hustlers, Beats, and Others* is a fascinating glance around some of the deviant edges of society. Chapter One is concerned with the rise and fall of poolrooms as a form of recreation in this country, and it illustrates impressively what a sociologist can do with historical materials when he has both a profound respect for his data and an honest affection for his subject. Chapter Two describes the lives and times of poolroom hustlers and offers one of the most compelling studies of an occupational group—deviant or otherwise—available in the literature. Chapter Three is a sensible, if somewhat abrasive argument for studying criminals in their natural habitat rather than depending as heavily as we ordinarily do on information gathered within the prison. Chapter Four is an absorbing account of the New York beat scene, circa 1960. Chapter Five, strung a little loosely

at the end of the volume, takes a thoughtful look at pornography and clears away a good bit of the conceptual debris that has been piling up around that topic.

In another respect, however, *Hustlers, Beats, and Others* is a lively and original editorial on a variety of sociological issues. This is Ned Polsky's argument with sociology. The language of the text has been deliberately chosen to scratch a little at some of the more exposed surfaces of the field, to put the rest of us on edge by challenging, provoking, even irritating us. Polsky opens the volume by warning that he selected these papers for print largely because "all of them sharply disagree with the accepted views (sociological or otherwise) of their respective subjects," and while the nature of his dissent is not always so radical as the introduction promises, this critical note is still the dominating accent of the book. Thus, at a time when criminologists are taking a new inventory of their findings (and are, incidentally, offering their services as experts to panels like the President's Commission on Crime), Polsky contends that we scarcely know what we are talking about because almost all our information on criminals has come to us filtered through prison bars. At a time when both the scholarly and popular press tend to view the beats and their more recent counterparts as exhibitionists committed to a noisy form of protest, Polsky insists that most of them are (or were) shy, anxious to avoid publicity, and hopeful of withdrawing from the square world without attracting its attention or provoking its censure. At a time when public discussion of pornography has finally found a vocabulary full of expressions like "prurient interest" and "redeeming social importance," Polsky breaks through the brittle crust of words with the announcement that hard-core pornography is, above all, dirty, and that its chief social importance is to facilitate masturbation and provide an outlet for sexual energies.

All of this makes the volume rather personal, and it is difficult to write a proper review of the work without dealing with the mind and outlook of the author as they are reflected in these pages. Polsky brings to sociology a set of talents and sensitivities that rarely survive graduate training as it is now constituted in this country. For one thing, he makes a virtue of being impolite. Where most of us learn to speak delicately about "perspectives" and "frameworks," Polsky takes flatter aim at his target: "Criminology textbooks can be roughly grouped according to the means they employ to cop out." Beyond that, however, Polsky does not rely very heavily on the newer technologies of social research and seems

to fear that they often serve little purpose other than to prevent the sociologist from becoming closely acquainted with his subject matter. Both by argument and example, Polsky suggests that the instruments of most enduring value at an investigator's disposal are his own intelligence and sympathy, and if he ventures out into the field carrying a heavy load of questionnaires and recording devices and all the rest of the armory of his profession, he is not only defeating his chances of entering into a meaningful exchange with another person but is drawing a curtain between himself and the important data of his field. Polsky makes these points persuasively, and readers who tend to agree with him on this score (as I do most of the time) will be heartened to find so articulate an ally. But Polsky's attempt to point a moral for sociology from his own field experience is sometimes a little disconcerting. The tone of his argument seems to shift back and forth between the even temper of the research reports and the testiness of the editorial remarks, and while this has the obvious advantage of keeping the reader alert and thoughtful, it also demands that he spend more time than usual in sorting out the voices competing for his attention.

And at times, the competition becomes so intense that the voices almost seem to cancel one another out. Polsky is a striking advertisement for the stance he recommends: his strength is his ability to work out in the open, as it were, dressed only in his own clothes and protected only by his own wit and honesty. His weakness, however, is his inability to appreciate why other sociologists are not always in a position to imitate his working habits—even when they would like very much to do so. To begin with, sociologists have occupational problems of their own, and I think it is fair to complain in this regard that Polsky does not show the same sensitivity in looking at the job situation of the sociologist that he shows in looking at the ambience of, say, the poolroom hustler. Sociologists may cop out, but hustlers and beats and burglars and whores have their separate and honorable reasons for retreating from the pressures around them. It is more important to note, however, that there are compelling reasons why sociologists approach the data of their field in the way they do. These reasons may be ill-informed, and Polsky may be just the person to show us why; but the fact remains that investigators who observe the social scene from a comfortable distance are making tactical calculations about the nature of sociological research as well as personal calculations about "safety" and "respectability." Polsky has challenged us on the second set of calculations but has said

very little about the first; hence, he is not paying sufficient attention to the way in which concerns about theory and method shape an investigator's approach to the field.

This is essentially a personal complaint about a personal book, and it is not intended in any way to detract from the overall excellence of the papers. Both as a research report and as an editorial, the work is valuable and very refreshing. I doubt that we could build a social science entirely out of the materials that Polsky recommends, but I am sure that we could not even make a good start without them—and any reader who permits the unexpected language of the text to interfere with a careful reading of its arguments will be the poorer for it.

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Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior. By ERVING GOFFMAN. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1967. 270 pp. \$1.45 (Paperback).

In the last decade, or since the publication of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman has deservedly become one of the most important figures in the broad field of microsociology. One of the most talented observers of concrete, real-life social interaction, he has been an able heir of not only the Chicago school (including both Park and Mead) but also of one of its major intellectual predecessors, Simmel. In depicting slices of the tragic/comic elements of everyday social life, Goffman may be thought of as the counterpart of O. Henry, and when he is at his best, close to Balzac.

The present fare does not offer the Goffman *aficionado* a progressive six-course banquet (it contains six different writings), but it does contain some delectable macadamia nuts. Unfortunately, the appetizers, in my opinion, are better than the *pièce de résistance*. The latter is entitled, "Where the Action Is", and is the new writing in this collection, accounting for nearly half the pages. Four of the pieces are reprints of 1956–1957 vintage, and like Summalian essays and fine Burgundy wines, such articles as "On Face-Work," "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," and "Embarrassment and Social Organization," stand the test of time very well, though "Alienation from Interaction" strikes me more as a *vin ordinaire* in the light of subsequent literature on alienation.

There are, of course, some fundamental themes which run throughout Goffman's writings. Central among them is his perspective on social interaction as a ritual game between actors, a

game that is more of a duel than fun, since the actor is invariably pitting the demands of his inner self against the exigencies of the organized social world. Goffman views the social world itself as essentially an impersonal set of moral rules to transform the actor into a human being who has to conform to "requirements established in the ritual organization of social encounters," (p. 45) Although the conceptualization of self manifestly derives from Mead's "I-Me" distinctions, Goffman's evaluation appears to me much more in consonance with that of Rousseau or even of Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*: man is by nature good (including his propensities) but social institutions (including the basic institution of social interaction) fetter his spontaneity. In my view, Goffman implicitly holds to a negative utilitarian image of social others; social life is more of a chronic case of "I-against-them" than of a "we."

In these early essays, Goffman's observations open up important vistas for sociological reflection. One, I would suggest, is that the subject matter of much of social anthropology, namely the significance of rituals in social organization, is not the distinct property of non-Western, pre-industrial societies but a constitutive feature of all social life; hence, it merits to be treated as a general sociological concern. The implication, which Goffman does not articulate, is that anthropology and sociology should stop thinking of themselves as separate disciplines. Further, when in the course of "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," Goffman uncovers how much social interaction partakes of basically religious dimensions even in secular contexts as each actor remains "a deity of considerable importance" (p. 95)—who would have thought of Goffman as sociology's answer to Luther?—the reader cannot help but think that Goffman picks up where Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* leaves off.

The only trouble is that such Goffmanesque "discoveries," however empirically genuine, seem to occur on an *ad hoc* basis with little if any reference to the corpus of sociological theory. Durkheim is barely mentioned, though all the ingredients for a dialogue are there. And when Goffman states that "individuals must hold hands in a chain ceremony, each giving deferentially with proper demeanor to the one on the right what will be received deferentially from the one on the left" (p. 85), this very suggestive proposition fairly begs to be related to Mauss' notion of prestation in *The Gift*, perhaps even to Levi-Strauss' derivative model in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. More-